



# Lake George Association

*People Protecting the Lake Since 1885*

## NEWS RELEASE

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### For IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **\$25,000 Award will Assist 2011 Lake Stewards Program**

**Lake George, NY – January 4, 2011** – The Lake George Association has been awarded a \$25,000 grant from the Lake Champlain Basin Program for the 2011 Lake Steward program on Lake George.

“We are relieved to receive early partial funding for this essential program, as emergency funding was required to run the program in 2010,” said Walt Lender, LGA executive director. In earlier years the LGA, as part of the Lake George Watershed Coalition, received Environmental Protection funds from New York State to run this prevention program. “Without preventative measures like the Lake Steward program, Lake George could suffer the kind of devastating impact, both ecologically and economically, that we’ve seen in other lakes,” Lender said.

The Lake Steward Program provides invasive species education and spread prevention. Lake Stewards are trained and hired in early summer, then stationed at multiple boat launches around Lake George to educate boaters about the threats of aquatic invasive species, such as Eurasian watermilfoil, zebra mussels, curly-leaf pondweed, and most recently, the Asian clam. In addition, stewards help stop the introduction and transport of invasive species via boats and trailers by conducting visual inspections and removing and identifying any plant or animal material found. Stewards also keep data on the body of water most recently visited prior to the Lake George launch, and whether spread prevention steps were taken prior to launch. Stewards can also inspect bait buckets and educate boaters about New York State’s new baitfish and firewood regulations.

The Lake Steward program has helped keep water chestnut from spreading to Lake George. Lake stewards found water chestnut on four boats about to enter Lake George in 2008, on seven boats in 2009, and on five boats in 2010. The program also helps prevent the spread of alewives within and beyond the Lake Champlain Basin. In 2009, lake stewards inspected close to 4,000 boats entering or leaving Lake George from May through August. Despite a scaled-back program in 2010, stewards inspected 2,538 boats and removed 56 invasive specimens.

The Lake George Lake Steward Program is a critical part of protecting the water quality of Lake George and preventing the spread of invasive species between waterbodies throughout the Lake Champlain Basin and the Northeast. Nearby, Lake Champlain has documented 49 invasive species, the St. Lawrence River has 87, the Hudson River has 91, and the Great Lakes have 183. These bodies of water surround Lake George on all sides, and boats are easily transported from one of these lakes to the next.

In the March 2010 issue of *Fisheries*, a journal of the American Fisheries Society, a report stated that more than two-thirds of boaters do not always clean their boats. This same report shows that boat launch programs are both needed and effective in slowing the spread of invasive species.

Lake George's proximity to several large cities, its clear, clean waters, and its beautiful mountain landscape make it one of New York's most popular lakes. If the Lake becomes overrun with invasive species, not only will the Lake's water quality decline, it will also become a source of invasive species for many other lakes in the region.

Locally, two other organizations run lake steward programs: the Adirondack Watershed Institute serves a number of Adirondack lakes, and the Lake Champlain Basin Program posts stewards on Lake Champlain. The LGA coordinates its program with these two other groups, training stewards together, collecting similar data, and most recently creating a shared boater handout for use by all three programs. There are also programs in Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. Many of these programs are organized at the state level.

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**Photo caption one:** LGA Lake Steward Monika LaPlante inspects a boat in 2010 at the Norowal Marina.

**Photo caption two:** LGA Lake Steward Lee Peters educates a boater in 2010 before entering Lake George at the Roger's Rock Campground launch.